



NEWS RELEASE

1303 SW First American Place, Suite 100, Topeka, KS 66604-4040
Voice (785) 271-2701, FAX (785) 271-2708, WEB www.rurdev.usda.gov/ks

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Contact- Harold Alford (785) 271-2701

USDA Rural Development Kansas Initiative Highlighted At National Conference 'Fort Riley Regional Initiative' Recognized

Atlanta, GA - USDA Rural Development 'Fort Riley Regional Initiative' was recognized this week at a national conference in Atlanta, GA. The conference, hosted by the Office of Economic Adjustment, was held to provide programming assistance to all communities and states impacted by the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure and featured an unprecedented level of federal interagency representation.

USDA Rural Development State Director Chuck Banks, representing the Agency at the conference, commented to the attendees, "The expansion of Fort Riley represents the most significant community and economic development event for that portion of Kansas since the Homestead Act of 1861. Because most of the impacted area is located in rural Kansas, USDA has committed its Agency resources to support this expansion."

USDA Rural Development, in close partnership with Fort Riley, announced the Agency's 'Fort Riley Regional Initiative' during the signing of the historic Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the USDA and the U.S. Army in 2005. As a result of the MoU, USDA and Fort Riley are cooperating to assist the personnel relocating to Fort Riley, along with the numerous communities in the region impacted by the Post's expansion.

"USDA Rural Development's 'Fort Riley Regional Initiative' provides an excellent opportunity for communities benefiting from the Fort Riley expansion to create more affordable housing opportunities, along with enhancing their local infrastructure. Whether it be improving local housing or upgrading community projects such as health care services, USDA Rural Development is positioned to assist in this very important Kansas economic development opportunity," commented State Director Banks.

During the conference, Junction City Manager Rod Barnes also explained how the community and Geary County is addressing their housing and community infrastructure needs. Junction City has partnered with USDA Rural Development over the past several years on a number of housing projects.

Additional information regarding USDA Rural Development's 'Ft. Riley Regional Initiative' can be obtained by contacting the Agency's Manhattan office at 785-776-7582 (extension #4).

USDA Rural Development's mission is to deliver programs that support increasing economic opportunities and enhancing the quality of life for rural Americans. As a venture capital entity, USDA Rural Development provides equity and technical assistance to finance and foster growth in homeownership, business development, and critical community and technology infrastructure in rural America. During Fiscal Year 2005, USDA Rural Development delivered nearly \$235 million in community and economic development programming benefiting Kansas. For additional information regarding USDA Rural Development and its programs, log onto the Agency's website at www.rurdev.usda.gov/ks or call the Agency's state office at 785-271-2700.

USDA Rural Development – Committed to the Future of Rural Communities.

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